

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 EUR-25 AID-20 DPW-01 OMB-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03

RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 RSR-01 /127 W  
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P 300332 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2342

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 9505

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, MILI, VS

SUBJECT: MR 4 SITREP, MAY 29, 1973

FOLLOWING RECEIVED FROM AMCONSUL CAN THO BEING REPEATED

QUOTE

CAN THO 367

SUMMARY: MILITARY ACTIVITY INCREASED SLIGHTLY MAY 28-29 IN MR IV. THE VC MINI- OFFENSIVE CONTINUES IN VINH LONG. VC BOOBY TRAPS HAVE INFLICTED HIGH CASUALTIES UPON THE 7 TH ARVN DIVISION. THE VI THANH ICCS TEAM PLAYED " WHAT' S MY LINE?" END SUMMARY.

1. SECURITY SITUATION ( A) THE RISE IN MR IV MILITARY ACTIVITY WHICH BEGAN OVER THE WEEKEND CONTINUED PAST MEMORIAL DAY. THE DELTA REPORTED 53 COMMUNIST- INITIATED INCIDENTS MAY 28-29 INCLUDING EIGHT GROUND ASSAULTS, 28 ATTACKS BY FIRE, TEN HARASSMENTS, AND SEVEN ACTS OF TERRORISM AND SABOTAGE. FIFTEEN RVNAF SOLDIERS WERE KILLED, 102 WOUNDED, AND ONE MISSING. ARVN SPOKESMEN CLAIMED 52 COMMUNIST DEAD AND ONE CAPTURED. CHUONG THIEN WAS AGAIN THE FAVORITE VC/ NVA TARGET.

( B) THE VC MINI- OFFENSIVE WHICH BEGAN APRIL 30 IN SOUTHERN VINH LONG CONTINUES. THE VC ARE TRYING TO CONSOL-  
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IDATE AND STRENGTHEN THEIR POSITION IN TRA ON, TAM BINH, AND VUNG LIEM DISTRICTS; TO PROTECT AN IMPORTANT COMMUNICATIONS- LIAISON ROUTE; AND PERHAPS TO REESTABLISH THEIR OLD BASE AREA IN VINH XUAN VILLAGE, TRA ON DISTRICT-- IN PAST YEARS THE LOCUS OF MANY B-52 STRIKES. REPEATED VC ATTACKS ON PATROLLING RF AND PF UNITS, AND ON PF OUTPOSTS, RESULTED IN THE MAY 14 XX DEPLOYMENT OF THE 2 ND AND 3 RD BATTALIONS OF THE 9 TH ARVN DIVISION' S 16 TH REGIMENT TO TRA ON DISTRICT. THESE UNITS ARE STILL IN PLACE. OPPOSING VC UNITS INCLUDE THE D-3 REGIMENT AND AT LEAST THREE PROVINCE AND DISTRICT BATTALIONS. THE TRA ON SITUATION HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE 16 TH REGIMENT' S ARRIVAL, BUT 9 TH ARVN DIVISION COMMANDER MGEN TRAN BI DI FEARS DETERIORATION WHEN HIS UNITS LEAVE. BOTH HE AND MR IV COMMANDER MGEN NGUYEN VINH NGHI HAVE CRITICIZED VINH LONG TERRITORIAL FORCE MALDEPLOYMENT AND LACK OF AGGRESSIVENESS. THE NEWLY APPOINTED COMMANDER FOR RF FORCES IN THE AREA HAS REPLACED WEARY, REMOTELY- POSITIONED RF WITH FRESH MEN. IF THE VC SUCCEED IN PERMANENTLY NEUTRALIZING GVN POSITIONS IN SOUTHERN VINH LONG, THEY WILL BE ABLE TO LAY CONVINCING CLAIM TO A " LIBERATED" AREA FROM WHICH-- DESPITE ARDUOUS GVN PACIFICATION EFFORTS-- THEY WERE NEVER TRULY EXPELLED.

(C) 7 TH ARVN DIVISION COMMANDER MGEN NGUYEN KHOA NAM TOLD A VICE CONSUL IN MY THO THAT HIS DIVISION' S CASUALTIES IN APRIL 1973 WERE 3 1/2 TIMES HIGHER THAN DURING THE FIRST MONTH OF THE VC/ NVA OFFENSIVE ONU YEAR AGO. LAST MONTH HIS DIVISION SUFFERED 290 CASUALTIES COMPARED TO ONLY ABOUT 80 IN APRIL 1972. NAM SAID ABOUT 70 PER CENT OF HIS WOUNDED PERSONNEL RETURN TO DUTY. BOOBY TRAPS CAUSED ABOUT 80 PER CENT OF DIVISION CASUALTIES. THE VC ARE ADEPT AT PLANTING SUCH DEVICES JUST AHEAD OF HIS ADVANCING TROOPS, WHO HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHING OUTPOSTS IN CONTESTED AREAS OF DINH TUONG. VC/ NVA TACTICS, HOWEVER, HAVE BACKFIRED AS WELL. NAM ESTIMATES 70 PER CENT OF VC/ NVA CASUALTIES ARE CAUSED BY THEIR OWN BOOBY TRAPS.

2. ICCS/ JMC: THE REGION VII VI THANH GVN JMC HELD A SURPRISE PARTY FOR THE ICCS MAY 25. THE VIETNAMESE INVITED THE FOUR DELEGATIONS TO A LATE MORNING RECEPTION TO MEET A " DISTINGUISHED CIVILIAN VISITOR". ALL FOUR DELEGATIONS ATTENDED, INCLUDING THE REGION VII POLISH AND HUNGARIAN CHIEFS AND A POLISH COLONEL FROM SAIGON WHO HAPPENED TO BE IN TOWN. THE GVN' S MYSTERY GUEST TURNED OUT TO BE NONE OTHER THAN NGUYEN HONG QUI,  
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AN NVA FIRST LIEUTENANT CAPTURED MAY 20. LT QUI, WHO HAD BEEN

A DEPUTY COMPANY COMMANDER IN THE 18- B REGIMENT, MADE A STATEMENT ADMITTING WHO HE WAS, THAT HE HAD INFILTRATED AFTER THE CEASEFIRE, AND THAT THE NVA WAS CONTINUING TO SUPPLY THE VIET CONG WITH MEN AND MATERIEL. THE CHAGRINED AND ANGRY POLES AND HUNGARIANS DECIDED IT WAS TIME FOR LUNCH AND LEFT. THE CANADIANS AND

INDONESIANS PLAN TO INTERVIEW THE PRISONER FORMALLY AT A  
LATER DATE. THEIR COMMUNIST COLLEAGUES,  
PREDICTABLY, HAVE INDICATED THEY WILL NOT PARTICIPATE.  
COMMENT: THE REGION VII GVN JMC IS PLEASED AS PUNCH ABOUT ITS  
LITTLE STUNT. SUCH SHENANIGANS, HOWEVER, WILL ONLY REINFORCE  
POLGARIAN SUSPICIONS THAT THE CANDESIANS ARE IN  
CAHOOTS WITH THE GVN AS THEY THEMSELVES ARE WITH THE PRG.  
BARNES UNQUOTE  
WHITEHOUSE

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